SAR SCENE

The Canadian Search and Rescue Magazine Online

Spring 2006 Vol. 15, #3

ISSUE FEATURES

50 years of SAR: the evolution of the Alberni Valley Rescue Squad

UAV competition focuses on SAR

Reducing the risk with GPS

West coast ferry disaster demonstrates community's heroism

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'Bijoux Baby' wins best new safe product award

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SAR*SCENE* online

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West coast ferry disaster demonstrates community's heroism

When *The Queen of the North* ran aground off the coast of British Columbia in the early morning of March 22, 2006, the small community of Hartley Bay First Nation was caught off-guard, making their heroic actions all the more daring. Going out in fishing and recreational boats, the residents brought the survivors to shore from lifeboats and life rafts. Everyone in the local community of Hartley Bay was involved in taking care of the reported 99 people that came ashore.

Unofficial reports say that the ship went aground at 12:24am and the Joint Rescue Centre Victoria received the relayed distress call at 12:26am. Canadian Forces Cormorant and Buffalo aircraft were tasked along with numerous Canadian Coast Guard and Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary vessels.

The situation could have been a lot worse if it had occurred during the summer months when the ferry is much busier. That night, there were 101 people reported on board out of a possible 700. Two remain unaccounted for and the RCMP is investigating their whereabouts.

"It was an amazing team effort," said Major Chuck Grenkow, Officer in Charge of the Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre in Victoria, in a radio interview on March 23.

"It was an excellent response," Maj. Grenkow said. "And not only from the dedicated search and rescue professionals who are on 24/7, but from the Hartley Bay First Nation community. They did everything they could — kudos to those folks."

Courtesy of the Canadian Coast Guard

The CCGS Sir Wilfred Laurier *was one of the five Canadian Coast Guard vessels that responded to the incident. Based out of the Canadian Coast Guard base in Victoria, it provides search and rescue services in addition to icebreaking, aids to navigation, fisheries enforcement, and other duties.*

Canadian Coast Guard cutter adopted by Toronto Fire Service

A Canadian Coast Guard cutter declared surplus late last year has a new home with the Toronto Fire Service.

The *SORA*, a 12.5m long multi-task utility craft, was presented to the Toronto Fire Service by former Fisheries and Oceans Minister, Geoff Regan, in late 2005.

The *SORA*, which will arrive in mid-April, will act as a back-up vessel to the *William Lyon MacKenzie* when the latter is not in service.

CBC features 19 Wing Comox SAR units

After visiting with crews from the Canadian Forces School of Search and Rescue and 442 Squadron, Rick Mercer gave his audience a better appreciation for role of SAR Techs.

The episode, which aired on CBC's Rick Mercer Report on April 4, demonstrated the work of SAR Techs when they rescued Rick from an overturned vessel and from open waters. The day continued with Rick being thrown off a jetty tower, strapped to a litter and treated for spinal injuries.

Photo by Sgt. Eileen Redding

Secretariat receives Certificate of Appreciation

In January 2006, the Water Incident Research Alliance (WIRA) presented the National Search and Rescue Secretariat with a Certificate of Appreciation for SAR New Initiatives Funding and support for a SAR NIF project to create a database of water-related incidents.

Canadian Inland SAR incident database available soon

The Canadian Inland SAR Incident System (CISARIS) is more user-friendly, has more options and will be available online later on in 2006.

Developed by the National Search and Rescue Secretariat in partnership with many ground SAR organizations, the system will provide incident records and allow for the development of new prevention programs.

There are three sections, with subsections in each, to input data: incident summary, SAR response and subject details.

It is linked to the Canadian Geographical Names Database, which will tell the user the latitude and longitude once the incident location is chosen.

The system can generate reports based on different criteria. For example, a user may want a breakdown of all incidents occurring in December, or a report based on resources used for rescues.

More information will be available on the Secretariat's web site later this year.

Volunteers an incredible resource: RCMP

A recent article in the Pony Express, an RCMP publication, highlights the importance of volunteers and the need for cooperation and collaboration between volunteer groups and police organizations.

"Search and rescue volunteers are an incredible resource," Staff Sergeant Mike Frizzell, former RCMP National SAR Co-ordinator, said in the article.

"They're organized, they're trained, they're equipped and they're totally committed."

The article mentions the hard work, financial constraints and significant time commitments volunteers face.

"It's very important for our detachments to understand what they have at their disposal and that they take steps to ensure there are solid bridges between the RCMP and those resources long before they have to call on them," said S/Sgt. Frizzell.

International Polar Year creates potential SAR impact

An intensive two-year period of research in the world's polar regions will begin officially in March 2007, and with it, an influx of scientists and researchers to Canada's North.

The International Polar Year is intended to advance knowledge of the interaction between polar climates and environments, ecosystems and societies. The area of study extends between Latitudes 60 to 90, North and South, approximately the southern limit of discontinuous permafrost in Canada.

International Beacon Registration Database now available online

The COSPAS-SARSAT Secretariat announces the International Beacon Registration Database (IBRD). It will provide a means of registering beacons when no national database exists in the user's country.

This database does not replace national beacon registration facilities such as the Canadian Beacon Registry. Visit **www.406registration.com**

New Lead Minister for Search and Rescue

The Honourable Gordon O'Connor is the new Minister for Department of National Defence and the new Lead Minister responsible for Search and Rescue.

First elected into Parliament in June 2004, Minister O'Connor began his career in the military with the Armour Branch and rose to the rank of Brigadier General.

People

Air SAR

Dany St-Pierre is the new Principal Technical Officer at the COSPAS-SARSAT Secretariat, replacing Wayne Carney, who has retired.

Over the coming months, the following senior appointment changes will occur in the Canadian Forces SAR community:

Vice-Admiral Yves Forcier, first Commander of recently formed Canada Command, will retire from the Canadian Forces this summer. **Lieutenant General Marc Dumais** will replace VAdm. Forcier.

Major Mitch Leenders replaces **Maj. Chuck Grenkow** as the Officer in Charge of the Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre in Victoria, British Columbia.

Maj. Henri Levasseur becomes the Commanding Officer of 439 Squadron, Bagotville, Quebec.

LCol. Dave Cochrane becomes the Commanding Officer of 426 Squadron, Trenton, Ontario.

Maj. Jonathan Nelles becomes the Commanding Officer of 103 Squadron, Gander, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Maj. Gilbert Thibault becomes the Commanding Officer of 413 Squadron, Greenwood, Nova Scotia.

Maj. Sean Friday becomes the Commanding Officer of 435 Squadron, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

SARSAV is selling their popular DVD, "SAR Best Practices," for $19.95, plus shipping. To order, please contact Bob Smith at **sarsavbob@sasktel.net**

Ground SAR

Sgt. Robert Lajoie has replaced **S/Sgt. Mike Frizzell** as the RCMP's National SAR Co-ordinator.

John Chaffey, former Chief of Non-Federal SAR Programs at the National Search and Rescue Secretariat, has been awarded a Governor General's civilian Meritorious Service Medal for his dedication to Ground SAR in Canada.

Since the National Search and Rescue Secretariat was established 20 years ago, only one person has been here since the beginning. Diane Miller has had many roles at the NSS and currently serves as the Executive Assistant to the Executive Director, Jean Murray.

The new president of Search and Rescue Saskatchewan Association of Volunteers is **Scott Wright**. Mr. Wright replaces **Robert Smith** who was president for six years.

Marine SAR

The Canadian Coast Guard's **Ron Miller** has been assigned to the Maritimes Region as the Director of Maritime Services for the next few months, while the Agency's senior staff appointments are finalized. When the assignment is complete, Mr. Miller will return to Ottawa as CCG's Manager, Search and Rescue.

André Audet, Search and Rescue Superintendent in the Québec Region, has assumed the duties of Manager, Search and Rescue, CCG.

Capt. Steve Sawyer, Chief, Office of Search and Rescue for the U.S. Coast Guard will retire in May. **Capt. Scott LaRochelle** will take over in August.

Canadian Safe Boating Council honours members of the boating community

At the 2005 CASBA awards in Toronto this past January, 13 awards were handed out to those people, programs, organizations and marinas that help make boating in Canada safer and better for all and protect the environment.

The 2005 winners include:

- David Laing, Fay Laing, Wieske van Zoest and Clayton Hickey: Canadian Power and Sail Squadron's Rescue of the Year
- Formula Media Group (Boatguide and Boating Business magazines): Best Media Contribution to Boating Safety (this is the first year this award has been given).
- Peter Garapick (Ontario Regional Manager, Boating Safety for Transport Canada) and Robert Miniello, Acting Staff Sergeant of the Traffic and Marine section, Field and Traffic Support Bureau, Ontario Provincial Police): Marine Professional of the Year.
- Jeff Evans: Top Volunteer Dedicated to Boating Safety
- Sergeant Wayne Atkins (3rd Canadian Ranger Patrol Group from CFB Borden, Ontario) and Canadian Coast Guard's Henry Larsen (an ice-breaker and Arctic Class 4 vessel operated by 11 officers and 20 crewmembers): Best Boating Safety Initiative conducted in Canada in 2005
- Collins Bay Marina, Kingston, Ont.: Safeguarding the Environment
- Steve Wagner of Salus Marine Wear Inc.: Marine Industry Award
- Fifty Point Marina of Winona, Ont.: Green Marina Environmental Award
- Barbara Byers and the Town of Little Current/Spider Bay Marina: Special Recognition Awards.

For more information about the Marine Industry Award, presented to Steve Wagner for his work in developing a PFD for babies, see page 4 of SAR*SCENE* Magazine.

Sambro crew awarded for multi-agency SAREX

A multi-agency Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX) held in Nova Scotia in late 2005 and won the crew of the CCGC Sambro an award.

The commemorative award, given for outstanding participation in a multi-agency SAREX, was presented to the crew in January 2006 for their development of a complex exercise scenario to improve inter-operability and inter-agency coordination in large-scale SAR incidents.

SAREX participants included the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG), the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary and

the Canadian Forces. Members of Ontario's Peel Regional Police force also participated to improve their on-scene commander skills.

Commanding Officer Stephen Beasley and the crew of CCGC Sambro (Ray Miller, Donald Morris and Mike Pettipas) are presented with a commemorative award for outstanding participation in a multi-agency SAREX. Also present are James Monroe, Fleet Standards Officer, Joe Murphy, CCGA Maritimes Co-ordinator, Gary Mason, CCGA Maritimes Business Manager and Mike Voigt, Superintendent, SAR.

Mike Voigt, Superintendent of Search and Rescue for the CCG, Maritimes Region, stressed the importance of these types of exercises.

"We will continue to raise the bar on our SAR exercises to further improve the interoperability of the CCG and our SAR partners."

First Safe Boating Award for company promoting PFD wear in advertising

The Canadian Safe Boating Council (CSBC) awarded its first ever Canadian Safe Boating Award (CASBA) recognizing companies who promote PFD wear in advertising.

NMMA Canada, producer of the Toronto and Vancouver International Boat Shows, as well as the Toronto In-water Boat Show, received a Canadian Safe Boating Award for Visible PFD Wear in Advertising at the 8th annual awards ceremony in Toronto Jan. 12.

NMMA was honoured because of the extraordinary effort in promoting PFD wearing as a natural part of boating.

"We're firm believers in the use of PFDs so we lead by example. We have hundreds of prominently placed signs throughout all of our events that show people enjoying the boating lifestyle wearing PFDs," said Linda Waddell, show manager of the Toronto International Boat Show.

"All of our ticket-takers, show greeters and information booth staff wear lifejackets."

Ted Rankine, CASBA co-founder, says consistent messaging on all fronts is vital to make wearing PFDs part of normal boating culture.
www.csbc.ca ■

Call for SAR Award Nominations

Do you know an individual or group that has made a significant contribution to of search and rescue in Canada?

The National SAR Secretariat's Outstanding Search and Rescue Achievement Award and the Certificates of Achievement were introduced in 1995 to acknowledge outstanding work done by search and rescue providers and organizations, and to raise awareness of search and rescue efforts across Canada.

The award and certificates will be presented at SAR*SCENE* 2006 in Gatineau, Québec on Friday, Oct. 6, 2006.

Nominations should be based on the awards program criteria and are due **June 2, 2006**.

Coffee Break: *A Canadian Forces Cormorant helicopter creates an optical illusion as it takes off from a landing pad behind a local Tim Hortons in Salisbury, New Brunswick.*

Photo by Stephen MacGillivray

'Bijoux Baby' wins best new safe product award

by Andrea Fournier

Salus Marine won the 2005 Canadian Safe Boating Council Safe Boating Award for best new safety product.

Salus Marine Wear has created a new baby Personal Flotation Device. Called the Bijoux Baby vest, the new design will ensure that a baby will turn face up from a face-forward position in the water.

The Bijoux Baby PFD supports a baby from 9 lbs to 25 lbs.

According to the Canadian Institution for Health Information, drowning is the second leading cause of accidental death of children under five years old, behind motor vehicle accidents.

Steve Wagner, president of Salus Marine Wear, identified a void in the industry. "We'd been getting calls from dealers and parents for this type of thing. And also, I had a daughter who, when she was born, didn't have a PFD."

"The secret to it working so well is that it is a non-fitting vest. It has a short front and it is mesh in the back. There isn't any foam in the back at all," said Wagner, meaning the foam side will always be facing right-side up.

The Bijoux PFD is not Transport Canada approved, but there are no current standards against which to evaluate it. Transport Canada has issued a statement concerning the Bijoux PFD.

"Having an infant onboard a vessel wearing a Bijoux PFD and not having another flotation device aboard is not illegal. If an infant must go onboard a small vessel, having the infant wearing a comfortable and effective PFD is the logical and appropriate decision."

Receiving the Canadian Safe Boating Award was a huge honour for Salus Marine Wear.

"It was nice to get recognized by the industry. We put a lot of research into our design — almost two years before we launched it," Mr. Wagner said.

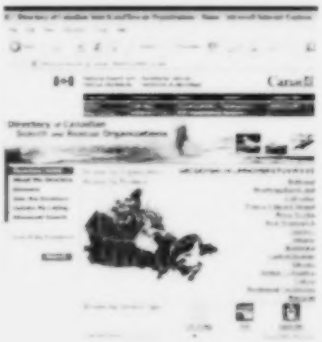
"We really had to step outside the box; put aside everything that's been done and approach it from a fresh point of view."

www.salusmarine.com ■

Andrea Fournier was a co-op student at the National Search and Rescue Secretariat in spring 2006.

Update your record in the

Directory of Canadian Search and Rescue Organizations



The Directory of Canadian SAR Organizations lists all air, ground and marine organizations across the country. It is a valuable tool for exchanging information and sharing resources. As a web-based tool, it can be used in recruiting to help the public find local SAR teams.

Is your information up-to-date?

Updating the information is easy. We'll provide a user ID and password so you can make the changes yourself. Contact the NSS at **enquiry.nss.gc.ca** or call 1-800-727-9414.

www.nss.gc.ca

Unmanned aerial vehicle competition focuses on SAR

by Andrea Fournier

Artist rendition provided by MDA Corporation

Artist's rendition of the Heron UAV. The potential for search and rescue is the focus for Canada's first ever Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Competition.

Canada will host its first Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) student design competition with the focus on search and rescue.

UVS Canada, a non-profit association representing public and private interest in unmanned vehicle systems, will host the competition.

As part of the challenge, competitors will be asked to find a missing person and wreckage from a downed air craft in a 2 km^2 competition area.

UAVs are not currently used in search and rescue, but the technology is prevalent in military operations for surveillance and combat.

Major Graham Newbold, a senior analyst with the National Search and Rescue Secretariat, says UAVs are effective in military applications hence the interest in the crossover to civilian applications, such as search and rescue.

"The primary use of the system is to search, provide communication relay and, perhaps in the future, to drop survival equipment to supply survivors until search and rescue forces can reach them," said Maj. Newbold.

The goal of the competition is to help advance the current state of knowledge, technology and use of design standards in Canada. Other countries have hosted similar competitions with focuses on both civilian and defence.

Andrew Carryer, competition technical director, says the competition has been in the works for several years. Canadian teams were entering other international competitions and seeing how much interest there was building in Canada, this is the right time for a Canadian competition.

Four Canadian universities have entered the competition — *L'École de technologie supérieure* in Montreal, *Université de Sherbrooke*, *University of Alberta*, and the *University of Calgary*.

General Dynamics Canada, the recipient of the 2005 UVS Canada Organization Award, has donated $15,000 for this year's competition.

The competition will be judged by a panel of experts. There are two phases. First, teams submit a written technical proposal by Mar. 15, 2006. Second, in 2007, teams demonstrate their proposal in one of three locations, still to be chosen.

"In doing this competition we get to raise awareness about what is already out there, as well as push the standards, like interoperability standards," said Carryer.

"This competition is really a joint effort between government, industry and academia." ■

Andrea Fournier was a co-op student at the National Search and Rescue Secretariat in spring 2006.

Success stories from NIF

Improving SAR through innovative projects

The following projects are supported by the Search and Rescue New Initiatives Fund.

Multilingual video helps reduce number and severity of SAR incidents in Nunavut

With no consistent communication for Nunavut visitors to address the hazards of Arctic wilderness travel and an increased focus on tourism in the area, it stands to reason an increase in SAR incidents is on the horizon.

However, collaboration between the Government of Nunavut and Parks Canada led to the development of a prevention project aimed at reducing the number and severity of such incidents.

With funds provided by the SAR New Initiatives Fund, the Government of Nunavut and Parks Canada developed a video to highlight the experience and skills necessary to stay safe in the challenging Arctic environment.

The video, narrated in seven languages, was widely distributed as copies were sent to visitor centers, tour operators, gateway communities, libraries and national parks.

PC 6/00 ■

The OPP takes action against alcohol-related SAR

According to the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), search and rescue resources are engaged on a daily basis because of inappropriate alcohol consumption. As a direct result of this, approximately 48 to 60 people die in Ontario each year on the busiest trails and waterways.

Conducted in partnership with Emergency Management Ontario and delivered by the OPP, Ontario's primary ground and marine SAR provider, the goal of the *Fatal Vision Challenge* project is to change these statistics.

The project involves an interactive educational program which allows the public to learn first-hand the effects of alcohol on the human body while operating a recreational vehicle.

OPP members, partner agencies and volunteers provide demonstrations province-wide at outdoor shows, fairs and exhibitions. The project primarily targets people between the ages of 12 and 18 who are using (or will use) recreational vehicles or vessels; however, adults can also gain from the demonstration. Parents and other adults often engage the OPP officers in discussions after the demonstration.

The project uses a trailer with a computerized, motion-based audio-visual system to demonstrate the effects of alcohol. As well, there are five smaller, more portable *Challenge* units to travel to less formal venues, such as local service and community groups and remote locations.

This initiative allows the OPP to reach at-risk populations through one-on-one interaction with high-risk users.

When not being used for educational presentations, the trailer will be used to support SAR operations.

The *Fatal Vision Challenge* project is part of a group of Ontario SAR initiatives funded by SAR NIF in 2005.

ON 1/05 ■

Project addresses public safety in Cree First Nation community

Using the rivers and bay waters as highways is part of the traditional lifestyle for many James Bay Cree community members. Many continue traditional pursuits of hunting and fishing which involve traveling up to 100 km by land and water.

Not only do the community members do this, but with the increase in tourism in the James Bay, Hudson Bay areas and Mushkegowuk region, visitors are engaging in wilderness travel across the region.

Ontario's far north, including the Mushkegowuk region, has an emergency incident rate that is higher than provincial norms. According to Moose Factory SAR, the number of SAR-related incidents has increased over the past 15 years. Since 1990, the annual average response has increased 600 per cent.

In order to increase awareness and address public safety concerns regarding wilderness travel, a new prevention campaign, called *Rise and Survive*, is being developed by the Institute for Far North Emergency Preparedness and Response Training and Development in consultation with Moose Cree First Nation and Moose Factory SAR.

In partnership with Emergency Management Ontario and funded by the SAR New Initiatives Fund, the project will have a two-pronged approach to public safety. Firstly it will raise public awareness about the need for increased knowledge and skill for those traveling through the remote areas of the region. Secondly, it will provide education materials and training to increase the knowledge base for the Mushkegowuk communities. All information materials will be available in English and in Cree.

The *Rise and Survive* project is part of a group of Ontario SAR initiatives funded by SAR NIF in 2005.
ON 1/05 ■

Public Service announcements make the difference

A 30-second public service announcement (PSA) can make a difference and the proof is on the radio and television.

A series of 10 summer and 10 winter activities or issues were highlighted in the 30-second spots and played on local radio and television stations in both English and French to increase awareness that safety is a shared responsibility. Each PSA focused on a single issue and there was a total of 80 messages disseminated to the public.

Funded by the SAR New Initiatives Fund and sponsored by Parks Canada, the project was developed to encourage Canadians to obtain and use the knowledge and equipment necessary to make decisions that could potentially reduce the risk and severity of SAR incidents.

The long term goal is to reduce the number of SAR incidents in National Parks and National Historic Sites by ensuring visitors are aware of various safety issues.

The PSAs were distributed to 98 television stations and 378 radio stations across the country.
PC 3/02 ■

NIF news

Much of the work done over the past months to renew the NIF program will strengthen the management, monitoring, reporting and financial performance of the fund. This work is largely complete, and the renewed administrative and financial processes are now in place. The NSS is developing new tools to help applicants and partners: a simplified application form, manual and guide, which will be available this spring.

A training session will be held in Ottawa in June for managing departments and agencies across Canada.

Fourteen projects that could not be funded in 2005-06 were carried over for funding in 2006-07, and are now underway.

The role of Federal managing departments and agencies has been strengthened and now includes increased management responsibilities under the renewed program.

Call for new projects

A call for new proposals will be issued this spring for projects to begin in 2007-08.

New tools will be ready at that time and will provide clear instructions on the new processes.

Anyone with a project in mind should first consult their SAR partner to ensure it fits within their overall priority for SAR.

The NSS will no longer receive proposals directly from provinces and territories; instead, each provincial/territorial partner will screen proposals at the regional level to ensure they are aligned to their own SAR priorities, and group them under a single omnibus proposal to the NSS.

SARSCENE 2006

October 4-7, Gatineau, Québec

Wednesday, Oct. 4

SAR Games

Teams of 4 people — 6 events
No entry fee
All skill levels from novice to advanced

Meet and Greet

Kick-off SARSCENE
Celebrate the Games winners

Thursday, Oct. 5

Opening ceremony

Welcome from dignitaries, hosts and sponsors

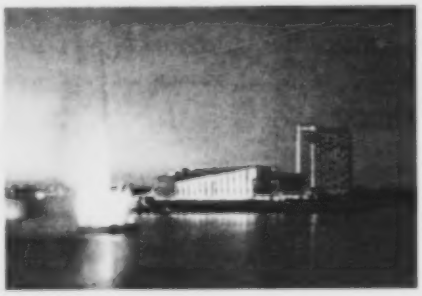
Presentations

Presentations start after opening ceremony

Trade show

NEW Dedicated conflict-free time and breaks in exhibit area
NEW Spotlight on Exhibitors reception

Volunteer appreciation night



Friday, Oct. 6

Presentations

Trade show and lunch with exhibitors

NEW 2.5 hours no-conflict time

SAR Awards Banquet

NEW Celebrate the awards a day earlier

Saturday, Oct. 7

Presentations

SAR air, marine and canine demonstrations open to the public

Contact the NSS to:

- Propose a presentation
- Buy a booth at the trade show
- Sponsor an event, speaker, delegate or team
- Hold a training session (Oct. 2 and 3)

To register visit www.nss.gc.ca

SEARCH AND RESCUE / RECHERCHE ET SAUVETAGE

50 years of SAR:

The evolution of the Alberni Valley Rescue Squad

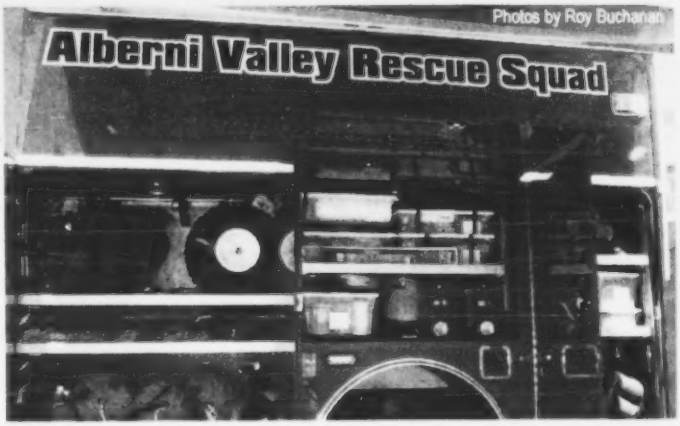
by Roy Buchanan

In 1955, an impromptu search for a missing hunter in the mountains of central Vancouver Island provided the momentum to form the Alberni Valley Rescue Squad.

Fifty years later, the squad is going strong with 49 volunteers who train in wilderness, inland water and urban search and rescue.

Incorporated in August 1956 as the Alberni Valley Mountain Rescue Squad, the group continues to provide SAR services to the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, an area characterized by rugged, mountainous terrain.

Charter members raised funds to purchase equipment, including the army H-hut the squad used as its first headquarters on land donated by the city. A used 4x4 pickup truck, acquired in 1971 and heavily modified, served as an equipment platform and command centre for over 30 years. This truck also provided emergency ambulance service to the valley during winter storms in its early years.



With no provincial body overseeing land SAR operations in the 1950s and 1960s, the squad developed its own tactics and training standards and worked closely with the RCMP.

For many years the squad was the only ground SAR group on Vancouver Island. Called out approximately 20 times a year, the squad has conducted hundreds of missions throughout the region, including rescues in mountains, on rivers and lakes of the interior, and on rugged islands along the west coast of Vancouver Island.

The 1964 tsunami was a major operation for the team. The members initiated rescue operations immediately and worked with local authorities for days. In the end, the squad was credited with saving many lives.

With the creation of the British Columbia Provincial Emergency Program in the 1970s, the squad came under its jurisdiction and it became officially known as the Alberni Valley Rescue Squad.

Extensive range of skills

In the early 1990s, the squad purchased a piece of land from the City of Port Alberni and built a new office complete with a classroom, kitchen and dining area as well as a communications centre.

A jet drive, 21-foot rigid hull Zodiac is used for river and lake operations and the squad purchased a new command and equipment truck in 2005. Planned purchases include two ATVs and a portable, inflatable rescue craft for small rivers and remote lakes.

Not only does the squad participate in rescues, but it also frequently provides safety personnel for community functions and presents the "Hug-a-Tree to Survive" program in elementary schools.

The squad maintains a search management capability, a rope rescue team and a tracking team. Many members have Swiftwater Safety, Avalanche Aware and helicopter hover-exit training. Training is conducted weekly from September until June. ■

Mr. Buchanan is a Search Manager with the Alberni Valley Rescue Squad.

Grief and Condolences:

what I learned

by Constable Paul Olmstead

During my 26 years with the Edmonton Police Service I have dealt with death and death notifications more than most. Specializing in search and rescue, including body recovery, has also led to many incidents of this nature.

I did what I was trained to do. Be considerate, tactful and respectful, both of the deceased and the family.

Now after many years I found myself on the other side of the fence. I was called to the hospital, met by my peers, spoken to by investigators and eventually I returned to work.

I wish I had the words to describe these steps of what I saw and felt, but they are still very personal and undefined.

It has been over a year since my wife and I suffered the death of our 19-year old son, Cody. The journey has been one with varied emotions and life altering thoughts and feelings. Now in many ways the real support and journey has just begun.

The entire issue of grief is one which makes many squirm, or allows others to show their supportive nature. This part alone has been an eye opener and as we all age, we will deal with this issue more and more.

We have been in contact with others who have lost children, specifically a support group called *Compassionate Friends*. What I learned is "less can be better." If I can share some of what I experienced, perhaps it will make us all a bit more aware of how one truly feels after suffering the death of a loved one.

- Be direct and do not use ambiguous words. Avoid terms such as 'passed on,' or commentary such as 'it could have been worse' and others.

- Wait for the questions if they happen. Silence at this point is critical to allow the bereaved to absorb what you said.

- Responses vary, and remember, you are dealing with a person in shock, despite how reasonable or controlled they appear.

- Seek the assistance or location of family members (Victim Services Unit, Chaplain etc).

As a friend, long term is the time when talking counts. The real test is four months and beyond when society says, 'we have grieved. Move on.'

A bereaved person does not want to let go and does not want time to pass as it represents the last time they saw, touched and spoke with the person who has died. This is the time they need to talk. Listen.

Remember that what we say, do, or don't do, may have a profound and lasting effect on someone who has lost a loved one (and in my case, a child).

Grief and bereavement are all about us in many cases and not the one who has suffered the loss.
Saying the wrong thing, saying too much or avoidance is all about us, not the bereaved. ■

Constable Olmstead serves with the Edmonton Police Service and works in many of the response units from Search Management to Flight Operations. In 2004, Const. Olmstead received the Outstanding SAR Achievement Award from the National SAR Secretariat.

Upcoming Events

Canadian Marine Advisory Council (CMAC)
May 1 to 4, 2006, Ottawa, Ontario

Emergency Preparedness Week
May 7-13, 2006, Across Canada

National Police Week
May 15-21, 2006, Across Canada

Washington State SAR Conference 06
May 19-21, 2006, Enumclaw, Washington

Safe Boating Awareness Week
May 20-26, 2006

International Association for Safety and Survival Training Meeting and International Conference
May 22, 2006, Sydney, Nova Scotia

National Association for SAR (NASAR) Conference 06
May 24-27, 2006, Austin, Texas

Canadian Forces Day
June 4, 2006, Across Canada

16th Annual World Conference on Disaster Management
June 18-21, 2006, Toronto, Ontario

The Aviation 2006 World Assembly
June 18-24, 2006, Toronto, Ontario

Parks Day
July 15, 2006, Across Canada

Joint Search and Rescue Conference
July 24-26, 2006, Arlington, Virginia

World Alzheimer Day
September 21, 2006

Canadian Safe Boating Council's 2006 Annual Symposium
September 21-23, 2006, Quebec City, Quebec

SAR*SCENE* 2006
October 4-7, 2006, Gatineau, Québec
Toll free: 1-800-727-9414

Rescue 2006
October 20-22, 2006, Reykjavik, Iceland

ISAR 2006
October 27-28, 2006, Portsmouth, Virginia

2006 New Zealand Land SAR Conference
November 17-19, 2006, Dunedin, New Zealand

ISAR 2007
October 25-30, 2007, Toronto, Ontario

For a complete list, visit ***www.nss.gc.ca*** and click on **Events**.

Canine technology for search and rescue around the corner

by Andrea Fournier

The Ontario Provincial Police Emergency Response Team (PERT) and Ryerson University are working together to create a head-mounted camera for police search and rescue dogs.

Photo provided by Constable Barnum

OPP Constable Kevin Barnum and his dog Dare are working with Ryerson University on head-mounted cameras for search and rescue

Canine Augmentation Technology (CAT) project, lead by Alex Ferworn, professor in charge of the Network-Centric Applied Research Team (N-CART), involves mounting a small camera to the head of a canine trained in search and rescue.

The camera will transmit video and sound feed back to the dog's handler.

Dogs will be outfitted with a camera, microphone, GPS and headset. N-CART is working on integrating all the components to a mobile computer which the office will handle.

Similar technology has been used in other countries. The U.S. National Institute of Justice used a camera attached to a collar, but it proved unstable. Police dogs in the United Kingdom use head-mounted cameras for evidence gathering in firearm situations.

"The project's goals are to allow a handler to see what the dog sees, hear what the dog hears, know where the dog is and be able to communicate with the dog over a greater distance or in difficult environments, such as rubble piles and collapsed structures," said Prof. Ferworn.

PERT member Constable Kevin Barnum, and his dog Dare, a four year-old black lab, are testing the CAT project.

Const. Barnum says the project is important because of the need for safety for both the dogs and the crew.

Prof. Ferworn emphasizes that many things have to be taken into consideration because of the police working environment. For example, the dogs must not get stuck, the equipment must be robust, easy to use and safe, and the officer must not be encumbered.

Ryerson colleague Lucia Dell'Agnese, director of fashion design, is assisting Prof. Ferworn by designing the harness to carry the camera. The prototype will fit different size dogs, have a tear-away safety feature and be lightweight.

A prototype is currently being used and N-CART is running video trials to obtain the most stable transmission possible, given the unstable nature of moving dogs. The next phase will be to find funding to purchase equipment and pay researchers.

"In order to test the system effectively we must expose it to realistic operating environments. This will take time and research support," added Prof. Ferworn. ■

Andrea Fournier was a co-op student at the National Search and Rescue Secretariat in spring 2006.

New Alzheimer patient profiles help New Brunswick SAR to find wanderers

by Andrea Fournier

When Gordon Friars was called to find a missing person who wandered from her home, he immediately went to speak to her family.

Through his questioning, he found out she suffered from Alzheimer disease and, in her mind, it was decades earlier.

Friars probed more to find out what her childhood was like, where it was and what kind of things she did.

He found his clue, gathered his team and began their search. It didn't take long to find the woman; she was by the lake not far from her home. She had grown up by a lake and that is where she felt safe.

"Typically an Alzheimer patient lives in the past," said Friars, President of the New Brunswick Ground Search and Rescue Team (NBGSAR).

"We talk to the family or caregivers to find out what decade they are living in and what types of things they did back then."

The NBGSAR team knows how difficult these situations can be. Averaging about 38 searches a year, almost half of their searches are for people with cognitive impairments.

The Alzheimer Society of New Brunswick is teaming up with the RCMP and NBGSAR to establish guidelines for finding lost patients.

A program called *Search is an Emergency*, created by the Alzheimer Society of Canada in 2004, aims to create a profile of persons at risk for wandering. The profile would include information on their description, health, wandering history and use of aids for walking, hearing or vision.

Friars says this type of information is vitally important.

"It makes us aware of the behaviour patterns. Without it, we would arrive on scene, talk to people, and find out the last place seen, but now we better apply our resources with this new information."

Alzheimer disease symptoms include loss of memory, judgment and reasoning, as well as changes in mood and behaviour.

Another program in which families can participate is the *Safely Home Registry*, also run by the Alzheimer Society of Canada. People at risk for wandering are outfitted with ID bracelets and identification cards with their personal information stored in a police database. When a person who wandered is found, police use the bracelet registration number to access the information and contact the family or care centre.

Photo courtesy of the Alzheimer Society of Canada

Dick Isabelle, Executive Director of Police, Fire and Emergency Services in New Brunswick, says the police services in New Brunswick understand the great risk of Alzheimer-affected people wandering from their homes.

"These registry programs have proven their value in a significant number of lost person incidents. Any measures that lead to even more rapid results in returning these people to their homes are definitely supported by us," he said.

"We're very pleased to see the emerging partnership between the NBGSAR team and the Alzheimer Society of New Brunswick. We will work to ensure that the policing community is also integrated with their efforts." ■

Andrea Fournier was a co-op student at the National Search and Rescue Secretariat in spring 2006.

Reducing the risk with GPS

by Bill Steer

Global Positioning System (GPS) technology is no longer just for hikers, the military and land surveyors.

It is a user-friendly technology now being applied for multiple purposes in the first response, tourism, natural resource, education and utility sectors. It is a tool for safety preparedness, reducing risk with cost effective solutions. Utilizing GPS should be part of all training and emergency plans.

GPS is showing up in many places. It is in your car, within safety beacons, on the golf cart, on bracelets attached to lawbreakers and available to parents for their children in wristwatch form. Police would like to have GPS bracelets attached to Alzheimer patients, bringing relief to loved ones while saving time and money needed for searches.

GPS, using satellite tracking, identifies a spatial location, a point of intersection from imaginary lines on the earth's surface. GPS satellites have atomic clocks built-in, so time, distance and location measurements become extremely accurate. Postal codes, addresses and telephone numbers are becoming geo-referenced with GPS co-ordinates.

It is important to understand the relationship between the map, the compass and the GPS unit. The handheld GPS unit can do so much with a little understanding of the basics of navigation.

Why use a GPS?

GPS units work with satellite, VHF radios and various communication systems. It may not be long until the cell phone has GPS capabilities linked to the E-911 (Enhanced 911) program now being developed. The ability to identify and communicate a specific location is upon us.

The following scenarios illustrate how a GPS unit could help in the development of public and personal safety measures.

• You are a police constable, first on the scene, summoned to find a missing person in a remote rural section of an unorganized township. The rest of the hunting party does not know where their friend was last seen. You are about to radio your GPS location to the communication centre and make preparations to start a search...

• As a volunteer fire fighter you receive a message from a provincial fire crew about a fire which is spreading in a remote section of the municipality. The location has been transmitted to your pager and you are now headed to the location to help. You occasionally check your GPS unit for location...

• As a boater, on an inland waterway, you view a capsized boat in the distance. The visible shoreline is more than one kilometre away and the wind is increasing the wave action. Using your VHF radio, you are about to contact an emergency contact number and transmit the location with your GPS unit...

• After a day of fishing, your truck will not start. Although you are not far off the Trans Canada Highway on a tertiary logging road, it is on an isolated section of highway. There are countless roads in the area, but luckily, the cell phone works, you packed your GPS unit and you are just about to describe your location...

• You are sailing off the coast and you hit an uncharted shoal. The damage is significant and the water coming through the hull is steady — faster than your pumps can handle. You reach for the handset to radio the latitude and longitude of your position from the GPS unit to the Coast Guard...

Photos by Joël Campbell

• The local emergency plan identified safe locations in case of a natural disaster. An ambulance needs to be dispatched to one of the safe locations but the main road is blocked. Your GPS unit has stored different routes to access the location. You are about to relay the series of new coordinates to the dispatcher...

• The coroner at the inquest for the recent tragedy asked if there were standards for communicating spatial information and if all personnel were trained with GPS...

There are countless other scenarios.

The Challenge

Were you lost when you left the retail store with your GPS unit, or, worse, when you received the one you ordered on-line? Most people are when they take the GPS unit out of the box. It is a too common occurrence: a person turns on the unit and wonders about those numbers displayed on the screen.

What was missing? What about directions and information about the settings on your GPS unit? Do you have your map and compass? Yes, you will need these too.

It is true, the on-board GPS unit in your car can bring you to your destination and the manufacturer's roadside assistance program knows where you are stranded. But what if you have to interact with the GPS?

There is more to basic navigation than relying on the unit. Organizations and individuals should be made aware and educated about the relationship between the map, the compass and the GPS unit.

An introductory or certified GPS course will help. Anyone using a GPS unit should be able to identify and describe a location with some details.

Like CPR and First Aid, GPS training will help. It is an inexpensive technology that requires some basic knowledge and a few skills. Be safer! ■

Mr. Steer is Director of the National Green Check GPS Certification Program and is a thematic map maker.